

Cultivator

www.AlfaFarmers.org • News from the Alabama Farmers Federation

Register By June 18 For Commodity Meeting

Registration for the Alabama Farmers Federation's 46th Commodity Producers Conference is open at AlfaFarmers.org through June 18. The annual conference is Aug. 2-5 in Montgomery.

Tours across central and southeast Alabama headline the meeting and spotlight the state's diverse commodities.

- **Blue Tour:** Pike County's KW Plastics, Golden Boy Foods, Virtual High School and Whaley Pecan Co.
- **Green Tour:** Bullock County's Wehle Center and Sedgefields Plantation and Macon County's The Wildlife Group
- **Orange Tour:** Pike County's Riverview Farms, JKH Farms and the Pioneer Museum
- **Purple Tour:** Montgomery County's Alabama Supreme Court, Maxwell Air Force Base and SweetCreek Farm Market
- **Red Tour:** Macon County's Moore & Davis Nursery, Lee County's Jordan-Hare Stadium at Auburn University and Tallapoosa County's Whippoorwill Vineyards
- **Yellow Tour:** Montgomery County's Foxwood Farms, AL Farms, Pintlala Cattle Co. and Campo Del Rio Ranch

The Alabama Farm & Land Expo is back for its second year the afternoon of Aug. 4. Seminars and Young Farmers Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture contests round out the agenda.

The 2018 Outstanding Young Farm Family will be announced at the closing banquet.

Secretary Of Agriculture Visits Alabama Farmers



U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue visited with farmers in Guin May 3. Topics included the farm bill, trade and irrigation. They also discussed improving customer services from USDA farm and conservation channels. From left are U.S. Rep. Robert Aderholt, R-Alabama, who chairs the House Ag Appropriations Subcommittee; Perdue; and Alabama farmer Sam Spruell.

Farm Bill Voting, Discussions Begin

When the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture passed its version of the farm bill April 18, it was the first hurdle in a lengthy process, said the Alabama Farmers Federation's Mitt Walker.

The Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018 would reauthorize farm programs and direct agricultural policy for five years. Farm groups praised the bill for preserving a safety net for farmers while enhancing conservation and accountability for nutrition spending.

"We're pleased to see the bill move forward and encourage Congress to finalize it this year so farmers can confidently plan for the future," Walker said. "We appreciate U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers listening to our farmers and representing their interests on the committee."

The Federation's farm bill advisory committee has reviewed major provisions of the legislation and agreed to write

House Agriculture Committee Chair Mike Conaway, R-Texas, supporting the bill.

"We view this as the first step to ensuring the continuation of fiscally sound and effective farm policy for our members," said Federation President Jimmy Parnell.

Conaway accepted more than a dozen non-controversial amendments to the bill. The committee also accepted two new provisions, including one supporters said would restore integrity of the Interstate Commerce Clause in the U.S. Constitution. The amendment would prohibit states from imposing agricultural standards on products from other states. It would nullify California Proposition 2 adopted in 2008, which banned the sale of eggs produced in cages. Alabama and other states sued California over the law.

Visit agriculture.house.gov/farmbill/ to learn more.

Staff Receives AU Research, Outreach Updates



The Alabama Farmers Federation Governmental & Agricultural Programs Department received research and outreach updates from Auburn University and other stakeholders April 12. Staff also took part in a feral swine trapping demonstration with Chris Jaworowski, left, of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Eligibility Extension For Livestock Disaster Program

Farmers who lose livestock to disease resulting from a weather disaster have a new path to eligibility for a key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) disaster assistance program.

USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation Bill Northey announced a national clarification to the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) April 24. In the event of disease, this change authorizes local Farm Service Agency

committees to accept veterinarian certifications that livestock deaths were directly related to adverse weather and unpreventable through good animal husbandry and management. The committees may then use this certification to allow LIP eligibility for producers on a case-by-case basis.

Eligible weather events include earthquakes, hail, tornadoes, hurricanes, storms, blizzards and flooding.

Enroll In USDA's Dairy MPP Through June 1

The new Margin Protection Program for Dairy will better protect producers from shifting milk and feed prices, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Enrollment ends June 1.

Changes include monthly margin period calculations, increasing covered

production to 5 million pounds on the Tier 1 premium schedule and lowering premium rates for Tier 1. An exemption is also included for paying an administrative fee for limited resource, beginning, veteran and disadvantaged producers.

Learn more at fsa.usda.gov/dairy.

Wetland Reserve Easements Applications Open

Eligible producers interested in the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program's Wetlands Reserve Easements program should apply by May 31 at their local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) center in Baldwin and Mobile counties.

Wetland reserve easements allow

landowners to enhance and protect wildlife habitat, reduce impacts from flooding, recharge groundwater and provide outdoor recreational and educational opportunities.

Funding is provided in collaboration with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Get Ag-tive

- **Bama's Best Catfish Restaurant Challenge** nominations are open through June 12. Nominate an eatery serving U.S. farm-raised catfish at AlabamaCatfish.org or on the Alabama Farmers Federation's Facebook page. The champion will be named in August.
- **The National Wheat Yield Contest** registration deadline for winter wheat is May 15. Multiple entries are allowed per farm. Register at WheatFoundation.org.
- **Young Farmers** Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture contest applications are due June 1. Applicants compete at the Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Producers Conference in Montgomery Aug. 4. Learn more at AlfaYoungFarmers.org.
- **Alabama Ag in the Classroom** (AIRC) teacher of the year Lorilyn Owen of Collinsville High School earned a \$435 scholarship to attend this summer's National AIRC Conference. Eva School teacher Kathy DeFoor also received a scholarship. They are two of seven Alabama representatives at the conference.

Events & Deadlines

- **May 10-12** - Beef Tour in Texas
- **May 17** - Sustainable Forest Management Workshop in Muscle Shoals
 - Register by emailing bethany.elliott@forestry.alabama.gov.
- **May 26-June 2** - A.L.F.A. Leaders International Education Tour in Spain
- **May 30-June 1** - Ag in the Classroom Summer Institute in Mobile
- **June 5** - Primary election
- **June 6-8** - Alabama FFA Convention in Montgomery
- **June 18** - Registration closes for Alabama Farmers Federation Commodity Producers Conference Aug. 2-5 in Montgomery
 - AlfaFarmers.org
- **Aug. 4** - Alabama Farm & Land Expo in Montgomery
 - FarmAndLandExpo.org



ALABAMA FORAGE SPOKESPERSON CONTEST

**AUG. 4, 2018 — COMMODITY PRODUCERS CONFERENCE
MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA**

State winner will receive free registration and expenses to compete at the 2019 American Forage & Grassland Council annual conference in St. Louis.

Contest consists of giving a 15-minute presentation emphasizing how forage management contributes to the grower's overall farm objectives and marketing.

WINNER
• **FREE REGISTRATION**

RUNNER UP
• **\$250 GIFT CARD**

HONORABLE MENTION
• **\$100 GIFT CARD**

**To enter, return the form by June 1 to:
Alabama Farmers Federation
c/o Jessica Mims
P.O. Box 11000
Montgomery, AL 36191**



HAY & FORAGE GROWERS

Forage Spokesperson Nomination Form

2018 Competition Deadline for Nominations is June 1

Competition Details

The Forage Spokesperson Contest is a new event during the Alabama Farmers Federation's 2018 Commodity Producers Conference and is the qualifying competition for the American Forage & Grassland Council National Spokesperson Competition held during the group's annual conference in St. Louis in January 2019. Each contestant is asked to develop a 15-minute presentation which gives an overview of their farm. Emphasis is typically placed on how forage management contributes to the overall farm objectives and marketing. An additional five minutes are reserved for questions from judges and the audience. A diverse panel of judges comprised of growers, industry representatives and government agency employees scores producers on innovation, practical application of sound principles, communication skill and enthusiasm.

Nominee Information

Name _____

Mailing address _____

County _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Number of years nominee has been growing forages _____

Participation in local state and national forage council activities _____

Please provide a 3-5 sentence overview of the nominee's farm _____

Nominator Information

Name _____

Email address _____

Phone _____

Students Focus On Agriculture In Design Contest



The DeKalb County Farmers Federation gave a \$500 sponsorship to students from Fort Payne who competed in the Real World Design Challenge April 21 in Maryland. In the competition, students designed practical solutions to agricultural issues using unmanned aerial systems. From left are Benjamin Atchley, Jordan Willoughby, Ansley Grider and teacher Hannah Turner.

Commodity Corner

Horticulture;

Greenhouse, Nursery & Sod

Producers can download the 2018 Southeastern Vegetable Crop Handbook at tinyurl.com/VegHandbook18. The free handbook is an effort between Extension specialists and researchers from disciplines such as ag engineering, entomology, horticulture, plant pathology, and soil and weed science.

-Mac Higginbotham, divisions director

Hay & Forage

Interested in a free soil and forage sample analysis? Contact a county or regional Extension agent for details on submitting samples for this Alabama Extension special promotion, or email alabamaforages@auburn.edu. Submit samples by Sept. 30. Remember, farming is a gamble, but science improves the odds.

-Nate Jaeger, division director

Poultry

A poultry grower educational seminar is set for May 15 at the National Poultry Technology Center in Auburn. Topics and demonstrations include lighting, hot weather ventilation, evaporative cooling and maintenance. Cost is \$20 and includes lunch. Register by May 11 at cvent.com/d/ngq0gf.

-Guy Hall, division director

Wheat & Feed Grain

RaboResearch reports that growers should be alert for marketing opportunities at key time periods, such as planting progress, pollination and yield estimates. Demand is firm, but projected corn acres and current global stocks are declining compared to the past few years. Additional acreage or yield loss will pressure corn prices. There is high risk for market volatility if projected U.S. corn acres remain at current levels.

-Carla Hornady, division director

Forestry

Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC) firefighters traveled to Oklahoma last month to fight fires. The AFC is a member of the Southeastern Fire Compact, an agreement with 12 other states to provide aid in fighting forest fires. This agreement allows the AFC to send crews out of state or call for support in a wildfire emergency.

-William Green, division director

Peanuts

The National Peanut Board has released "The Peanut Vision." The website shows how peanuts are one of the most sustainable, nutritious food sources and are positioned to meet the challenges of feeding the growing population. Learn more at peanutvision.org.

-Caleb Bristow, division director

Durdin Named Director Of External Affairs

The Alabama Farmers Federation's Matthew Durdin was promoted to director of external affairs April 23.

"I'm excited to be back in the field, where I'll work with Federation leaders and future political leaders through the election process," said Durdin, a former area organization director who served as the legislative programs director for the state Senate since 2013.



Durdin

He will lead the Federation's Research Consultants efforts and provide strategic direction for the organization's electoral actions.

Durdin lives in Auburn with wife Nicole and three children.

On The Move

- **U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby** was confirmed as the Senate Appropriations Committee chairman April 10. He will have a major role allocating federal funds and will also chair the Defense Subcommittee.
- **Eric Mackey** was named state superintendent of education April 20. The Cherokee County native begins his new duties May 14 after serving as executive director of the School Superintendents of Alabama.
- **David Farnsworth** retired from the Alabama Farmers Federation April 30. Over his 19-year career, the area organization director covered counties across central Alabama to Georgia and Mississippi.

OBITUARY

Tom Smith of Clanton died Jan. 16. He was 86.

Smith was Alabama's 1986 Farm of Distinction winner and served on the Chilton County Farmers Federation board.

He is survived by wife Marlene Smith; son Greg (Rita) Smith; daughter Vivian (Mike) Satterwhite; and grandson Jeremy (Leanne) Smith.

Parnell Visits County Leaders



Alabama Farmers Federation and Alfa Insurance President Jimmy Parnell, right, visited farmers in Chambers, Lee and Tallapoosa counties at the Tallapoosa County Girls Ranch in Camp Hill April 27. Annually, Parnell travels the state meeting farmers such as Chris Langley of Chambers County, left.



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USDA Aid Available For Past Cotton Crops

Cotton farmers have two opportunities in May to improve U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) assistance for past crops.

Sign-ups for the Cotton Ginning Cost Share (CGCS) related to the 2016 cotton crop end May 11.

Through the CGCS program, eligible producers can receive a one-time cost share payment, which is based on 2016 cotton acres reported to Farm Service Agency (FSA) multiplied by 20 percent of the average ginning cost for each region. The Southeast region rate is \$23.21.

Seed cotton will soon be a covered commodity under the 2014 farm bill. In May, the FSA will contact farm owners and operators about allocating their generic base for 2008 through 2016.

Growers also have a one-time chance to update their upland cotton yield established in the 2008 farm bill to be used as a payment yield for the Price Loss Coverage program.

Submit applications at local FSA offices. Learn more at fsa.usda.gov.

Florence Favorite Racks Up Bama's Best Ribs Title



Smokin' on the Boulevard in Florence is the 2018 Bama's Best Pork Ribs champion. Restaurant owners Jeff Carter and Karen Hill won \$500 in the inaugural contest, sponsored by the Alabama Pork Producers. Judges were Susan Swagler, Alabama NewsCenter restaurant reporter; Daniel Tubbs, Alabama pig farmer; and Bob Plaster, competitive cook. From left are Plaster, Swagler, Carter, Hill, Tubbs and Alabama Farmers Federation Pork Division Director Guy Hall.